

CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, INC.

130 EAST TWENTY-SECOND ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.

VOL. XVIII, No. 5

BULLETIN

MAY, 1939

The Fundamentals of a Community Service to Delinquent Children Through the Court

Social Science

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JUDGE H. G. COCHRAN

Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, Norfolk, Virginia

(The following paper is printed in part from the address given by Judge Cochran at the Southern Regional Conference, Nashville, Tennessee, March, 1939.)

THE newer philosophy and the more recent developments in the criminal law, as exemplified in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts and probation, combine law and social work. The revolt against inflexible treatment by the law of delinquent children was largely due to a quickened social conscience influenced by the social sciences, and resulted in the establishment of the Juvenile Court, which betokens a new attitude on the part of the state, that is, of society, toward those of its younger members whose conduct or condition brings them within its jurisdiction. The purpose of the court in dealing with the child is to ascertain not only, indeed not really primarily, what the facts are in relation to the specific act or incident which is responsible for the child being brought to the court, but also or rather to find out what are the causes which are responsible for the conduct or condition of the child, whether these causes be physical, mental or emotional handicaps, deficiencies or difficulties, or whether they be environmental influences, such as parents, home, school, associates, neighborhood conditions or other causes; and having ascertained these causes, to work out a solution to correct the causes or remove the child from them or otherwise prevent their continued operation and effect upon the child's life. To do something constructive with and for the child is the goal of the entire procedure.

I am fully aware of the tragic failure of a great many Juvenile Courts to attain this goal, even measurably. Sometimes this failure is inherent in the personnel of the court itself, sometimes in the failure of the community to provide adequate facilities for the work of the court and to give it the support it should have financially and otherwise; sometimes it is due

to other causes or a combination of the things mentioned and other causes. But I am not concerned here now to deal with that phase. Rather my purpose will be to indicate what the court, properly staffed and properly supported, may do.

"The juvenile court is America's most notable contribution to the field of criminology and penology. It is responsible for the revolutionary changes not only in society's attitude toward children who have offended against the laws, but toward adults as well. It is responsible for the development of probation and for whatever progress has been made in socializing procedure in courts dealing with adult offenders. Today the vanguard of thought is recognizing that many of the principles of socialized treatment which the juvenile court inaugurated, such as the study of characteristics of the individual and the environment in which he lives, are applicable and should be extended gradually to the whole field of criminal justice." (Frederick A. Moran, 1930 Year Book, National Probation Association.)

"The central idea in the juvenile court procedure has been consideration of the delinquent child—a friendly attitude toward the child and his problems. It has refused to blame the child for his delinquency. It has refused to consider the delinquent child as different and apart from other children. It has freed itself from the impediments of the doctrines of total depravity, individual responsibility, freedom of choice, the magic of authority, and the divine rights of parents, teachers, and others in positions of authority. It has accepted with their implications the newer sociological and psychological ideas, that where there is delinquency, there is a delinquent situation; that individual responsibility is completely overshadowed by parental and social responsibility in cases of delinquency; and that the authority must be respectable, intelligent and sympathetic. It is quite signifi-

cant that the juvenile courts have not had to change this central idea during these times of new orientations." (Andrew B. Steele, 1932-1933 Year Book, National Probation Association.)

Such in general terms is the underlying conception of what the juvenile court should be. Let us consider now, against this background or on this foundation, more specifically what the fundamentals of its service are.

1. The problem we are dealing with is a child, sometimes called a *problem* child. Perhaps *eighteen years* is at present the best practical age limitation. So we are dealing with a child under eighteen years of age. That child is presumably an unadjusted or maladjusted child. Some law has been violated or there is incorrigibility, or he is beyond parental control, or a truant from school or what not. He is a delinquent. What is delinquency? It might be defined as failure of satisfactory progression as a social being. It might be defined as "conduct which annoys the neighbors," which is fundamentally what crime is, that is, conduct annoying and injurious to others. It is anti-social conduct. It is a violation or contravention of some rule or law which society has laid down for regulation of behavior. I have on a former occasion defined it as "the selfish, impulsive and socially uncontrolled acts of individuals for their own advantage and aggrandizement, done in accordance with their own desires and impulses without regard to the interests, rights, welfare or safety of others." It is evident that the problem is not an easy or simple one, but is rather complex and multiform. And perhaps the first essential of a satisfactory dealing by the court is the realization that it is a difficult problem.

2. The second fundamental may be said to be a court especially established to deal with these problems instead of being a branch of some other court. The court should have domestic relations jurisdiction, that is, of problems arising in the family, offenses by one member of the family against another, and authority to deal with relations between husband and wife and the child, etc., as well as jurisdiction to deal with adults who commit offenses against or upon juveniles or subject them to vicious, immoral or other unlawful influences. This adult jurisdiction is really essential to a satisfactory dealing with all the related problems which may arise, and the court should also have jurisdiction to deal with neglected and dependent children and those responsible therefor, as well as delinquent children. The line of demarcation between delinquent, dependent and neglected children often cannot be sharply drawn.

3. The third fundamental may be said to be skillful personnel to deal with the problem, which means spe-

cifically a qualified judge and qualified probation officers.

(a) The Judge—

(1) The Judge should be chosen because of his special qualifications for juvenile-court work. He should not only be trained in the law, but should also have acquaintance with special problems and an understanding of child psychology.

(2) His tenure of office should be sufficiently long to warrant special preparatory studies and the development of special interest in juvenile court work, preferably six to eight years, maybe life tenure.

(3) The judge should devote his whole time to the work of the court, or if this be not necessary, that should be his first responsibility, and he should give sufficient time to it to keep the detention of juveniles at a minimum, to hear cases promptly without undue delay, to hear each case carefully and thoroughly and to give general direction to the work of the court.

(b) Probation Officers—

(1) The probation staff should be appointed by the judge from an eligible list secured by competitive examination and approved by a supervising board or commission.

(2) The qualifications of probation officers should be preferably graduation from college or its equivalent, or from a school of social work. Certainly they should have social work training or experience, better both. Probation officers should also have good characters and attractive personalities, as well as tact, resourcefulness, sympathy, and the ability to deal with and influence people. Adequate compensation will be necessary to secure such probation officers. The case load which each probation officer carries should not be too large, preferably not more than fifty cases at a time. Girls' cases should be dealt with by women officers, and boys' cases, at least boys older than ten or twelve years, should be dealt with by men officers.

4. (a) Either before the case is heard by the court or before disposition is made, there should be in a great majority of cases, at least, adequate social investigation by the probation officer, that is, a study of the child, including physical and mental examination and the study of his home life, school career, religious background, and his environment, together with recommendations by the officer to the court as to disposition. In some cases psychiatric or psychological study of the child is necessary to a proper solution of the problem.

(b) One or both parents should be in court with the child when the case is heard.

(Continued on page 6)

Orphant Annie At Our House

HELEN CODY BAKER

Publicity Secretary, Council of Social Agencies of Chicago

(With Mrs. Baker's permission we are reprinting her column, which appeared in the Chicago Daily News on April 1, 1939.)

I DIDN'T think I had seen the last of Mrs. John Q. Public when she walked out of this office the other day, and I wasn't disappointed. Yesterday she turned up again, with a new light in her eye.

"You gave me an idea," she began, "and I've been kind of mulling it over in my mind ever since. Do you remember what we said about those home-finding societies?"

"Oh, yes," said I. "The agencies that find foster homes for dependent children."

"That's right. Well, before I tell you my plan, I want to know one thing more. I always thought children who hadn't any homes could go to orphanages."

"So they can," I admitted, "and many of them do. But orphanages have changed a lot in the last twenty years. They realize that there is nothing better for a child than a home with a father and mother in it. So, even in orphanages, children often live in separate cottages, with a house mother for each small group. And many orphanages are now placing children in foster homes."

"What kind of homes?" asked Mrs. Public. "What kind of families?"

"The best kind of home," I told her, "is one where the father and mother are not too young and not too old, where the father is the provider for the family, and where there is no serious trouble that would make a child unhappy. You see, many of these children come from broken homes where there has been death or divorce or some other real trouble. When the agency that has charge of them looks around for a new home for that child, it tries to give back some of the opportunities that life has taken away. It wants to find just a nice, average home with nice, normal, sensible people."

"Oh, John and I are very normal," said Mrs. Public. "Of course, she added hastily, "I wouldn't say we never disagree. He likes detective stories, for instance, and I can't bear them. And he won't play contract bridge. But at least we never disagree in front of the children. We decided long ago that we wouldn't do that, and we've always stuck to it."

"How many children of your own have you?"

"Two. A boy and a girl. But they're both in high

school, and just lately I've been feeling that I didn't have enough to do. I thought about getting a job—but so many people need work nowadays. And, really, all I know how to do is keep house and bring up a family. . . . Then I remembered what you said about foster homes for dependent children, and I talked to John about it. He was real interested, but he wanted to know how much it would cost. We aren't rich people, you see. We aren't poor, either. But our other expenses. . . ."

"Yes, I know," I admitted. "You certainly do have your hands full. Well, all of these home-finding agencies expect to pay for a child's board. They buy clothing, too, and take care of medical, dental and incidental needs. Of course, you and John are supporting these very agencies, out of your gifts and taxes, so it's only fair that you shouldn't be put to any extra expense."

"Who would be the right person for me to see about it?" asked Mrs. Public.

"That depends on the kind of child you want. There are eight large home-finding agencies in Chicago."

"Dear me," said Mrs. Public. "I wouldn't know which to choose. I'll have to see what John thinks. We haven't any special religious preference—or prejudice, either."

"But you would see that any child you took into your home went to Sunday school and church, wouldn't you? These agencies are careful to find homes where a child's own faith will be kept alive and where he will have some religious training."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Public.

"Then the next thing, if you're really serious, is to get in touch with one of these societies. You'll find them all in the telephone book. They'll want to study your home and get acquainted with every member of your family. And if you and the agency finally decide to go ahead, they'll stand right by you to help in any way they can as long as the child stays in your home."

So I gave her a list of the home-finding societies and she went away very excited and pleased. I believe she's found a new career. She'll do it well, too—for the longer I know Mrs. Public the surer I am that she has courage, kindness and common sense. All she needs is an opportunity to use them.

BULLETIN

Published monthly (omitted in July and August) as the official organ of the Child Welfare League of America.

C. C. CARSTENS, Editor

The Bulletin is in large measure a Forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

Annual subscription, \$1.00

Single copies, 10c.

Checks payable to Child Welfare League of America, Inc.

News and Notes

Experimentation

FROM the Annual Report of The Children's Mission to Children of Boston we note the following two interesting experiments:

In the past, we have placed delicate children for summer building-up care in country foster homes. This year (1938) we tried placement in groups.

Milton Academy, the Fessenden School, and the Crouch School allowed us to use some of their buildings during the summer holiday. For two months we cared for a group of about fifty-two children, sent by the hospitals of Greater Boston. Each of the schools had a quota of from sixteen to eighteen. Most of the children had rheumatic heart disease; all of them were undernourished. The régime included plenty of good food and rest. There was a constructive program in craftwork, drawing, and nature study which was conducted by volunteers. This with weekly excursions to nearby places of interest constituted the main activities, since the children could not play strenuous games. There was an average gain of seven pounds during the summer, which showed that the work was undoubtedly beneficial. Since it appears that group placement under careful supervision was more beneficial than individual placements, we very much hope that some group organization will take over the work. Because of budget curtailment it is necessary for us to give up this much needed work.

The second experiment was made possible because tuberculosis in children is on the decrease, and therefore the Children's Pavilion of the Sharon Sanitarium had not been used to capacity for some time. Through the efforts of Dr. Walter A. Griffin and Dr. John Hubbard the pavilion is now being used for a group of our children who had had attacks of rheumatic fever recently but who have no appreciable heart damage as yet. The children sleep out-of-doors and spend a good share of the day in the open.

Medical supervision is carried by Dr. Hubbard and Dr. Griffin; Social Service, by a member of our staff. The nursing and occupational therapy personnel are furnished by the Sanitarium.

The results of this plan cannot be judged until the severe weather is over, but all the children are in better condition than when they were admitted. No active cases of rheumatic fever are taken, hence an active program can be carried out.

New Director Appointed

OUR congratulations and good wishes go to Walter W. Pettit. Announcement has just been made by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Community Service Society of New York, of the appointment of Mr. Pettit as Director of the New York School of Social Work, to succeed the late Porter R. Lee. Mr. Pettit has been a member of the staff of the School for twenty-four years and has been serving as Acting Director since the death of Mr. Lee.

Evert Grant Routzahn

WITH the death of Evert Grant Routzahn on April 24 we lose an outstanding pioneer in the field of publicity and interpretation in social work. For twenty years or more Mr. Routzahn has carried on this work with the Russell Sage Foundation, and though he retired a few years ago, he continued an active interest in the field up to the time of his death. Mr. Routzahn, with his wife, Mary Swain Routzahn, were the joint authors of two source books on publicity for social work.

Why a Health Program?

THE Children's Bureau of Delaware, in laying plans for a medical program, made use of a survey of its medical work by Dr. Florence A. Browne, pediatrician of the Child Welfare League of America. This survey outlined carefully those facilities in the community open to our children, stressing the fact that medical care was entirely on a volunteer basis. Because of this and the need to distribute the burden as evenly as possible, a great variety of hospitals and doctors throughout the state had been used, resulting in a lack of consistency in medical work. The same child seldom saw the same doctor. With change of workers and change of foster homes, no reliable record was kept of the illnesses of childhood. Some of the children failed to receive even routine vaccination and diphtheria immunization.

In the first working out of our plans, as we started the new service in New Castle County, where most of our infants and small children were concentrated, we were able to secure space in the medical clinic in one of the local hospitals through the efforts of the pediatrician in charge of our program. He gave us free service at a time that was very inconvenient for him, but the only time that would fit into the hospital plan. The hospital supplied, besides space, a nurse for the clinic hour, a clerk for record keeping and incidental supplies. In the time allotted, we could bring in four children for their periodic examinations. This was not a treatment clinic and any treatment was taken care of by reference to the appropriate clinic elsewhere. Children requiring Wassermanns or blood counts were referred to the city laboratory at some distance from the hospital. Waiting was done in a long, narrow room, unattractive in appearance and usually more than half-filled with ill or partially ill people waiting to follow us. Because of the inconvenient hour, our doctor was often forced to be absent and different interns took over the clinic for that session. The early hour also worked hardship for the children, since many of them in this rural county had to be brought in from a considerable distance. Mis-laid records were common because we seldom had the same clerk.

These sixteen appointments a month were all we were allowed to cover the health needs of over one hundred children in this county. In the two lower counties, we did not even fare as well. The only available free service was the State Health Clinics, and one or two doctors who were interested in the Children's Bureau sufficiently to contribute their services. Examinations in the State Clinic were limited to supervision only; no formula adjustments were permitted. Workers felt disinclined to call upon doctors for volunteer service unless the situation seemed to them and the foster mother urgent. Many strange things happened as a result. One foster mother, for instance, fed the baby in her care according to directions in a government book in the absence of more immediate advice. She felt confident that this was right and the worker relied on her greater experience *and* the government! The unfortunate thing was that the formula failed entirely to suit this baby's nutritional needs. When he visited the doctor, after an interval of four months, "just to be sure he was progressing all right," he was found to have a severe anemia which took much strenuous treatment to correct. Regular formula adjustment by a competent pediatrician would have spared the baby this ordeal. On another occasion a worker drove over

eighty miles to get a baby into the local baby health station, the only one in the state where a pediatrician was in charge and formulas could be obtained, only to find that the doctor couldn't be there that day, and no one had been able to let us know in time.

In March, 1938, through the efforts of the medical committee who had been studying the situation, a planned program was developed for the three counties. Rooms were secured in New Castle County in an unused wing of our old building and set aside entirely to be used for a clinic for our children. Members of the committee interested themselves in making these rooms attractive, and it has been a source of satisfaction to see a more wholesome acceptance on the part of the child and the foster mother as pleasanter and more healthful outward surroundings have been available. A small laboratory attached to the clinic makes it easier for the child and convenient for the worker to secure admission tests at the time of examination.

A pediatrician is in charge of the medical service, and his leadership and the contribution he makes in terms of routine work have been invaluable in developing the program. Children are examined in the clinic on admission; this examination includes a Wassermann, smears, urinalysis and often a blood count; hearing and eye tests are done on school children. Return examinations are determined by the age of the child and the recommendation of the physician. All school children are examined at least twice yearly. As a saving of workers' time and as an aid in scheduling, an appointment system is used in all three counties. A physician interested in children and the work of the Bureau in Kent County and a pediatrician in Sussex County have set aside time on special days each month in their private offices to continue the same service to the child should he be moved to a permanent home in either of these counties.

All of this medical service is on a paid basis, and although it is hard to prove in actual figures the value of preventive health work, we do know that this winter, with a high incidence of illness in the community, our own morbidity statistics are half those of last year before the plan went into operation; no child has been ill enough to need hospital care. Previously, gross defects received correction, but the minor defect which may result in more serious difficulty later comes to light more promptly under our present system. Cases in point are those of a number of children who have had sinus treatment; two children who were discovered to have an allergic condition severe enough to limit their activities; a number

of children who were referred to the State Orthopedic Clinics, with a resulting improvement in posture.

Our clinics are serving more and more as a convenient and practicable place for health teaching. Many of our foster mothers have never had a baby in their care from this agency; some have had no experience with babies at all; one of the points of emphasis in working with them has been a direct contact between the pediatrician and the foster mother. From him she learns the best accepted method of good physical care for the baby, particularly in regard to feeding. From her, he is able to obtain the information no one else can reliably supply about the baby's food consumption, elimination and activity. Together they work out the new schedule suited to the individual child. Feeding difficulties are checked as soon as they occur. This clinic visit is supplemented by a home visit from the nurse some time during the week following, and the foster mother again has a chance to talk over anything which may puzzle her or anything that she feels does not agree with the baby. In spite of the difficulty in making the plan work in the beginning, the result has been highly gratifying; our pediatricians feel that all of the babies show the result of supervised care, comparing favorably with any child in a good home of his own.

Although we feel that this plan of medical care is working more advantageously for the child, we are learning constantly ways of carrying on better in the future. Every foster home is an integral part of the community, small, but multiplied by many foster homes in the course of time. Our foster mothers receive a certain amount of training in health work through their contact with the clinic and its services. We like to feel that if this health teaching has the value we believe it has, it will spread beyond that one home, from neighbor to neighbor, and be a bit of leaven to add to the work done by other health agencies in the community.

—ALICE W. RUE

Executive Secretary, Children's Bureau of Delaware, Wilmington

The Fundamentals of a Community Service to Delinquent Children Through the Court

(Continued from page 2)

(c) No publicity should be given to the case. The hearing should be private, with no one present other than those directly concerned in the case; and in many cases at least only the child and his parents and

the witness who is testifying at the time should be present, others being excluded from the court room.

(d) The hearing should be informal, the primary purpose being to get the truth, especially from the child; and though all the child's legal rights should be scrupulously observed, any formal adherence to rules of evidence and the rules of procedure which characterize the criminal court have no place in this procedure.

(e) There should be no jury trials in children's cases. They are inconsistent with both the law and the theory upon which the children's codes are founded.

(f) Children involved in neglect and dependency cases should not be present at the hearing, except for purpose of identification or other specific reason.

(g) Both the child and parents should be given a clear understanding of the nature of the proceedings and the disposition made of the case, for instance the conditions of probation should be made clear and should generally be put in writing and given to the child or the parents.

(h) Written report of the proceeding, including the gist of the testimony, should be preserved by the court for the purpose of future record and interpretation.

5. Procedure Before Court Hearing and Detention

When a juvenile is taken into custody, in a great majority of cases, the child can be taken to his home and left in the custody of his parents by the officer with instructions to bring him to court on the next day on which the court sits for juvenile hearings. If for any reason it is unwise to leave the child with his parents or in his home, whether because of the nature of his parents or the condition of the home, or because there is good reason to believe that the child could not or would not be brought to court, the parents should be notified of the child being taken into custody and when the hearing will be, and the child should be brought to the court or taken to the detention home or boarding home of the court—never to the jail or police lockup. The number of cases in which it is necessary, if the police act intelligently, to retain custody of the child is comparatively few. Transportation by police wagon should be avoided.

Detention homes present various difficulties which time does not suffice to discuss. Only children who must for good reason be detained should be kept in custody, and then for a minimum time—generally for a day or two until the case can come to court. Sometimes detention must be continued until some solution can be worked out, generally because the child should not be allowed to return to his own home. The

detention of children in jail is barbarous, and should not be tolerated.

6. In a great majority of cases placing the child on probation under such conditions as are in the individual case designed to correct the conditions which are found to be responsible for the delinquency, is the normal procedure. Generally speaking, the parents must be relied upon, required if necessary, to see that the conditions are complied with, e. g., for instance, regular attendance at school, obedience to parents, not being allowed to run the streets, not to be away from home without permission, to be home not later than a certain hour at night, not to loaf in public places, such as street corners, streets, etc., sometimes not to have association with certain people, etc. Enlisting the interest of the church in the child, or having him join the Y. M. C. A., Boy Scouts, or Boys' Club or Settlement House, is often valuable. Physical examination may disclose need for medical attention, which should be secured by the parents if able or through the court's instrumentality. Sometimes psychiatric study and treatment is needed and fortunate is a community which has such service. Sometimes the child is so feeble-minded that commitment to an institution is indicated.

In any event if the child is placed on probation, the probation officer should have frequent contact through the probationer reporting to him and visits to the home of the probationer and acquaintance with his progress in school is necessary. And the probation officer should develop and carry out a program designed to meet the needs of each child on probation. In this behalf the aid and cooperation of various other agencies, such as church, school, recreational and character building agencies, and sometimes individuals who will act as friend or big brother to the boy, are aids which contribute greatly to successful work. The aim of the whole procedure is to rehabilitate the child and adjust him to successful social living in his home and community. Where this cannot be done in his own home, placing the child in the home of relatives or in a boarding home if a good home with relatives is not available, may be resorted to.

Sometimes commitment to a State Industrial School is the best solution. If these schools are really training schools, as they should be, they may meet the child's needs when other resources fail. Generally the child should not be removed from his home environment if the problem can be solved without doing so. It may be pertinent to point out that in Virginia the court does not commit the child directly to the Industrial School, but to the State Department

of Public Welfare instead, with recommendation that the child be placed in such a school or in a foster home; and the final decision rests with the State Department—which is a very good provision, especially if the judges of courts which commit are not as thoroughly qualified as they should be, or have not the facilities for study and diagnosis which are available to the State Department.

The law should also make specific provision that any record the child may have in the juvenile court should not be in any sense usable against him subsequently in any legal or criminal proceeding.

7. The court should have a record system which provides for filing of necessary legal records and of social records covering the investigation of the case and study of the child and a record of the work done by the probation officer with the case on probation. These records should be the confidential records of the court and not open to indiscriminate public inspection, but only to the inspection of attorneys representing the child or the child's parents, the parents themselves, or others having proper reason or right to have access to them. The court should also compile annually statistical information showing the work of the court and its results so far as this may be done in the statistics.

The juvenile court should be the focus of community service for delinquent, dependent and neglected children. And if it has the resources and personnel to do so, it may well extend its service beyond the walls of the court itself and organize the community for the correction of conditions which breed delinquency, as the Los Angeles Court has been so instrumental in doing through the organization of Community Co-ordinating Councils.

The juvenile court, which renders such a service to the community, is proceeding in a rational, scientific and intelligent manner to prevent delinquency and crime. As Sutherland, in his work on "Criminology," says: "The logical policy in regard to crime is the policy of prevention. Punishment is at best a method of defense; prevention is a method of offense. It is evidently futile to continue to take individual after individual out of the situations in which they become criminals, punish them and permit the situations to remain in other respects as they were. A case of delinquency is more than a physiological act of an individual; it involves a whole network of social relations. And if we deal with that whole set of social relations, we shall be working to prevent crime."

Book Reviews

THE CHOSEN BABY, by Valentina P. Wasson. Illustrated by Hildegard Woodward, Carrick and Evans, Inc., New York, 1939. \$1.50.

THIS attractive little book is well described in the Foreword by Sophie Van S. Theis, Secretary of the Committee on Child Placing and Adoption, State Charities Aid Association of New York City. "The author of 'The Chosen Baby' told this story to her own adopted son, Peter, when he was 4 years old. It at once became his favorite story. With the thought that other children would also like it, since it is the story of every adopted child, Dr. Wasson has written this book for parents to read to their children. Because it was written out of the immediate experience with children who are still under 5, 'The Chosen Baby' is intended for parents of young children, who wish to make the first explanation of adoption as happy as it is true"

The story is carried out in picture book fashion with whimsical drawings on each page. The implications which the illustrations carry through are of interest—the husband immersed in his newspaper, the wife patiently darning socks, while the cat and dog look on point up the loneliness of the home without children. The interpretation of relatives for little Peter is well carried out with delightful small child touches. The illustrator evidently had her tongue in her cheek when she portrayed the social worker, but the fancifulness of her whole concept even carries that off. The masterpiece is the last picture in the book. When the second baby, the little sister for Peter, has been chosen with Peter's help, the admiring relatives and ever-present cat and dog gather 'round. Apparently there is no attention left in the group for small Peter, and then he does the most likely thing possible on such an occasion—suddenly stands on his head with one eye hopefully looking for an audience.

—SYBIL FOSTER

BIOGRAPHIES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT, Arnold Gesell, Catherine S. Amatruda, Burton M. Castner, and Helen Thompson. New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc. 1939.

THIS is a highly technical book which, though comprehensible to a relatively large group of professional workers, could be fully meaningful only to the small group of investigators who already have a wide background in the subject and methods under discussion. It pre-supposes familiarity with many facts and concepts in child development, and with details of examining methods, especially as set forth in other

books by Dr. Gesell and his colleagues. It is likely to be of chief value to:

- (1) The trained and experienced examiner polishing his technique in diagnosis.
- (2) The student of growth and growth curves.
- (3) The instructor in psychology or child development who desires to enrich his understanding of problems of growth.
- (4) Any psychologist with a good background and an interest in child development.

In spite of the wealth of detail presented in the eighty-one biographies, the contribution of the book is general, rather than specific. It presents no new organized theory, no new techniques. The material—both the case material and the generalizations of the author—is of value as it is integrated with previously formulated concepts and the experience of the reader. It stimulates both analysis and speculation of the relative weight of constitutional and environmental factors in given situations.

The section on "Foster Care and Child Adoption" presents eight colorful biographies showing irregularities or change in development with different types of placing. In all instances of improvement cited, this followed placement in a better home. The author's point of view is summarized in the statement that "from the standpoint of providing the best opportunity for bringing out potential abilities, even a mediocre family home is superior to an institution."

The book leaves one with a pleasant feeling of optimism and encouragement because of the evidence it presents as to the validity of measures of maturity in young children when these measures are applied with the proper caution.

In a book describing this type of careful experimentation it is refreshing to have it end on a note of speculation, as to whether Walt Disney's gift of fantasy might be traced to a childhood experience in which, during a moment of confusion and terror, he unintentionally killed an owl!

—NINA RIDENOUR

New York State Committee on Mental Hygiene

A CIVIL Service examination for Case Supervisor in a Department of Public Welfare has been announced. Evidently in an effort to save money some application blanks are being distributed which were on hand instead of printing new ones. Two of the questions asked in the blanks are, "Did you serve in the Civil War?" "Were you honorably discharged?"

—From N. Y. School of Social Work Faculty Digest, April, 1939.